



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, *Corporation Counsel*

Press Release

Web: nyc.gov/html/law/home.html

For Immediate Release

**NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES
24TH ANNUAL STAFF AWARDS**

***PARTICIPANTS, HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2005,
TO RECEIVE ACCOLADES AT CITY HALL TONIGHT; PRESS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE INVITED***

Contact: Kate O'Brien Ahlers, Communications Director, (212) 788-0400, kahlers@law.nyc.gov

New York, Dec. 15, 2005 – The New York City Law Department announced its 2005 staff awards today, honoring employees for their outstanding achievements and accomplishments during the past year. The awards will be given tonight at a reception at City Hall at 5 p.m. in the main Council Chamber. Press and photographers are welcome to attend.

"These awards signify the dedication and commitment our Law Department Staff has demonstrated through their solid work ethics and perseverance on behalf of the City," noted Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo. "The staff should be proud of its efforts."

The 2005 awards include:

Corporation Counsel's Award for Distinguished Legal Service

The CORPORATION COUNSEL'S AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED LEGAL SERVICE is awarded annually to an attorney who has served the Law Department for at least 10 years and who has consistently demonstrated the superior achievement and dedication that define a distinguished career. This year's award goes to the Law Department's highly regarded Spencer Fisher.

- **Spencer Fisher, Recipient** – Spencer Fisher is a remarkable attorney, well known by many in the Law Department for his legal knowledge, analytic ability, common sense and creativity. Spencer is responsible for advising the Mayor's office and city agencies on a wide array of issues, and supervising attorneys in the division. He is a key component of the Division of Legal Counsel, and a recognized expert in many areas of municipal law, often called upon to deal with several complex issues simultaneously. Over the last few years he has worked with various Charter Revision Commissions, assisted in the development of substantive election reform proposals and contributed to developing theories in litigation with the City Council over local laws, including the sweatshop bill and the equal benefits bill, as well as legislation regarding predatory lending. Spencer also played a role in drafting complex budget legislation and assisted in the development of the 311 Center and the establishment of a Housing Authority anti-trespass policy. Spencer's knowledge has also been helpful in dealing with civil service and personnel issues, and affairs regarding the Chief Medical Examiner's Office, such as in DNA-related matters.

Martin J. Devine Memorial Award

The MARTIN J. DEVINE MEMORIAL AWARD is awarded each year to a member of the non-legal staff who has shown distinguished performance, achievement, dedication and initiative during a Law Department career of at least 10 years.

- **Annie Davis, Recipient** — Annie is responsible for the supervision of six full-time claim specialists and provides technical support for over 9,000 pleadings that are processed yearly in the Tort Division. Each week, the Tort Division receives between 100-200 summonses and complaints served by plaintiffs seeking to recover monetary damages for alleged personal injuries and/or property damage. Annie reviews every Summons and Complaint and determines whether to assign the case to one of the claim specialists for initial investigation or, if the allegations suggest that insurance coverage may be available, she makes the determination to refer the matter to the Insurance Group. She frequently works with the Affirmative Litigation Division in connection with pleadings requiring affirmative action to preserve the City's right to insurance coverage. For her many years of dedication to the Law Department, for her outstanding level of expertise in the field of evaluating and responding to often complex pleadings and for her generous willingness to share that expertise with colleagues, Annie receives this award.

The Edith Spivack Special Recognition Awards

The EDITH SPIVACK SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS, named in honor of Edith Spivack, who sadly passed away this year after a 70-year career at the Law Department. They are given to non-managerial attorneys, with more than five years of service, for specific outstanding achievement as well as overall dedication and superior performance. This year, we recognize six of our staff who have demonstrated such excellence.

- **June Buch, Recipient** – A Senior Counsel in the Affirmative Litigation Division, June has been instrumental in creatively developing and pursuing claims on behalf of the City for over 20 years. At the moment, she is both prosecuting a case in state court and defending a case in federal court on the intricate question of whether and how section 253 of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 impacts on the City's franchise authority. Over the years, June has been successful in the most difficult challenges. When the federal government audited the Housing and Preservation Development's (HPD's) Community Development Block Grant program and disallowed millions of dollars, June successfully challenged that disallowance, recouped the money and earned the admiration and gratitude of her client. In 2003, when the a large bond case came into the office, it was only natural that June would be one of the people assigned to the case, as it involved the potential loss to the City of \$2.5 billion.
- **Andrea Cohen, Recipient** – A Senior Counsel in the Contracts and Real Estate Division, Andrea has been with the Law Department since 1984. She routinely assists agencies with complicated issues by drafting specific provisions. Andrea has been very effective in stepping in and finalizing negotiations with vendors when agencies have become stalemated. Furthermore, she specializes in information technology (IT) contracts and has an excellent grasp of software copyright and liability issues. Andrea has been responsible for issues related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and has drafted and negotiated several HIPAA agreements for execution by City Agencies. In addition, she has worked tirelessly on the CityTime contract, a \$120 million technology contract to create the Citytime and leave system. Finally, Andrea drafted a key Department of Education contract to provide custodial services at scores of schools throughout the city, a major DOE policy initiative to improve the condition of schools throughout the New York area.
- **Robert Firestone, Recipient** – As Senior Counsel in the Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation Division, Robert is one the experts on excise tax matters. He joined the Law Department in 1993, and he currently oversees the work of the division attorneys on excise tax matters. His insights are sought even by the State of New York on complex tax matters. Robert routinely appears before the New York City Tax Tribunal, Supreme Court, and has also appeared before the New York State Court of Appeals. He has litigated matters this year ranging from the issue of energy market deregulation and the utility tax to the real property transfer tax consequences of bulk transfers of cooperative apartments. He is often asked by the City's Economic Development

Corp. to offer his analysis of contemplated economic initiatives and economic development proposals involving the City and the tax consequences that may flow from implementing such initiatives and policies. Robert is always accessible to the division attorneys, City agencies, and is recognized as a leading voice on tax law issues in New York City and is gaining notice on the national stage. He is published in the field of tax law and is a valued adjunct faculty member of New York Law School in its tax program.

- **Elizabeth Freedman, Recipient** – Elizabeth's 20 years of service to the Law Department have been spent entirely in the Appeals Division, where she is recognized by her peers as a highly skilled and dedicated appellate advocate. Her reputation for excellence is so well known in the Law Department that trial lawyers frequently request that she be assigned to handle the appeal of their most difficult and challenging cases. She has developed a particular expertise in cases involving the First Amendment, including notable cases such as: *Paulsen v. Gotbaum*, upholding constitutionality of certain Parks Department rules for special events in parks; *Johnson v. Bax*, a claim by a demonstrator who protested being placed in a specific area while picketing a presidential speech; *Time Warner*, a case challenging the City's use of certain governmental and educational cable channels; and numerous other cases involving challenges to permitting regulations governing demonstrations, rallies, parades and the sale of art in public places. In 2003-2004, Elizabeth worked directly with the Corporation Counsel on the appellate papers in the "LGAC" bond case, where this office successfully defended the Payment Act, which was enacted to replace the \$2.5 billion in scheduled debt-service payments to be made on Municipal Assistance Corporation bonds. Beyond all of the above, Elizabeth's enthusiasm for her work and her friendly and approachable personality make her an ideal mentor for young attorneys and interns and a valued colleague.
- **Amy London, Recipient** – Amy joined the Tort Division in the early 1980s and the Medical Malpractice Unit in 1986. Over the last 20 years, she has proven herself an outstanding, stalwart attorney. Amy's duties include reviewing, editing and evaluating all motions on medical malpractice issues. She single-handedly oversaw and managed the Medical Malpractice Unit's Mediation Project of approximately 25 cases in which she saved the City of New York millions of dollars in possible judgments. Amy has also assisted other units within the Tort Division, specifically on the Peters and Cowan motion which involved allegations against EMS. In addition, Amy has won several summary judgment motions over the past year. The most notable rulings include: *Singh v. EMS* (failure of plaintiff to ever serve a complaint after only serving a summons with notice), *Hernandez v. HHC* (allegations of psychiatric malpractice for not admitting a patient without any prior psychiatric history who later committed suicide elsewhere), and *Reubel v. HHC* (plaintiff's attempt to seek an extension of time in which to serve a summons and complaint four years after filing, denied for failure to show good cause). The judiciary frequently adopt Amy's legal arguments and quote her verbatim. Amy is energetic, works tirelessly and is always willing to lend a hand.
- **Christopher Reo, Recipient** — For the last 15 years, Chris has been an important presence at the Law Department due to his superb skills as a lawyer and his heartfelt enthusiasm for working in New York City government. Chris joined the Environmental Law Division in 1998, after litigating many cases in Torts and General Litigation. In the last year, Chris's performance and achievements in several areas exemplified the full spirit of the Special Recognition Award. Chris served as the lead lawyer in the contentious *Landmark West!* litigation, a case originally brought in 2003 to challenge the City's environmental review for the sale of the building at 2 Columbus Circle to the Museum of Arts and Design. Chris, working with another lawyer in the division, prevailed in the trial court, and the decision was upheld by the appellate division. Chris also served as an invaluable member of the litigation team defending the Hudson Yards Rezoning. This case required intensive work for the first three months of the year. Chris is a highly skilled, creative lawyer who is respected by those he litigates against for his professional demeanor no matter how contentious the issue.

Law Department Achievement Awards

Each year an ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is given to select members of the full-time non-legal staff for specific achievements during the past year, as well as for overall dedication and superior performance. The winners of this year's Achievement Awards are:

- **Graciela Garcia, Recipient** – As a legal secretary in the Affirmative Litigation Division, Graciela truly understands and implements the concept of “support” as a member of the Law Department’s support staff. Graciela has excellent time-management skills and often juggles numerous administrative tasks, simultaneously, for multiple attorneys. In the last two years, Graciela has become part of our insurance coverage project, which has saved the City more than \$38 million in direct costs and freed the attorneys in the Tort Division from having to defend hundreds of cases where there is insurance coverage available. In addition to the aforementioned tasks, Graciela maintains over 450 insurance takeover files assists with sending out status letters to takeover counsel twice a year, maintains closed case charts, handles case management entry of various insurance-related tasks, and maintains the insurance docket for the division listing current and closed declaratory judgment cases. Graciela undertook this new insurance work despite a significant increase in workload that resulted from several staff changes.
- **Kevin Massiglia, Recipient** – Kevin embodies an outstanding employee with a special balance of artistic and professional language skills. He is the supervisor of production personnel, including legal secretaries, proofreaders and graphic artists, within the Document and Data Processing Center of Operations Division. His tenure with the Law Department began as a part-time proofreader in the Document and Data Processing Center. Soon afterward, he earned a promotion to supervising a group of proofreaders, legal secretaries and graphic artists. It was in this environment that Kevin’s artistic talents and supervisory skills blossomed. Kevin’s adept command of his responsibilities boosted our Graphic Arts work to a professional level never before experienced. Of particular note was the 2004-2005 Annual Report, where the beauty of the cover photo (shot by Kevin) flowed throughout the report. Kevin’s artistic edge, finesse and skillful tutelage of the applications used in his unit have helped evolve and promote the image of the Law Department. His masterful work is not only utilized for our agency’s internal publications, but also for external publications and presentations including recruitment and publicity, as well as many of the mounted photographs that adorn our hallways.
- **Dina Perli, Recipient** – As the HotDocs coordinator for the Law Department, she performs all programming, quality control and upkeep for HotDocs. (HotDocs is a computer program for things like division reports.) Dina is also the sole programmer of the Tort Division’s Borough Intake Program. This program prompts attorneys and support staff through the critical steps in case intake, evaluation, analysis and preparation. The system also stores all case-related information in a database and uses it to quickly create standard legal forms that which used to require significant staff resources to generate. She developed the Intake program, which was rolled out in March 2005. In only 7 months, over 1,200 cases have been processed through the Borough Intake program and the Tort Division has collected all necessary agency documents in nearly 45 percent of them. In addition, the intake project has led to the referral of more than 75 cases for insurance takeovers, more than 175 to early settlement projects, and the completion of almost 200 affirmative motions. The success of the Borough Intake program is due in large part to her hard work and skilled programming efforts.
- **Les Vindics, Recipient** – Extremely dedicated and efficient, Les has amazingly excelled in the myriad of roles he has undertaken at the during his eight years at the Law Department. Les serves as Division Liaison to Information Technology, on division applications like internal e-Forms and CityTime, our agency’s time-keeping system application. He also acts as agency security officer on citywide system access as well as serving as Administrator of hand readers and existing timekeeping applications. Les demonstrated true excellence and dedication in coordinating the implementation of the existing CityTime system as well as assisting in the development of the new application. The Law Department is currently using a “lite” version of the citywide application for only 50 percent of our staff. The remaining 50 percent (support staff) are continuing to use software that operates with our existing hand readers to record time. This system is an older version of an application and is currently not being supported by a maintenance contract with the vendor. The vendor for this existing system indicated that it would

not provide us a maintenance contract going forward without requiring us to pay an exorbitant retroactive fee. Les felt that this fee was unfair and unnecessary, and has taken on the additional responsibility and tedious task of maintaining the system himself.

LEGAL ASSISTANT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The LEGAL ASSISTANT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS are presented to Paralegals, Claims Specialists, Student Legal Specialists or Senior Student Legal Specialists with at least one year of service at the Law Department who have demonstrated outstanding performance and achievement during the past year.

- **Denise Byrnes, Recipient** – Denise is the sole pre-trial paralegal in the Staten Island Tort Division. She is responsible for contacting the client agencies and securing documents needed in the City’s defense of personal injury and property damage cases. In addition, Denise identifies potential fraud cases and acts as a liaison to the Risk Management Unit by referring cases where there are compliance problems with client agencies. Following the untimely passing of the Staten Island Tort Borough Chief, Denise stepped in, and her knowledge of the status of hundreds of cases was instrumental in the transition of a new legal staff. She was relied upon to assist in identifying high-exposure cases and was often required to abruptly shift priorities and assist on cases at both the trial and pre-trial stage in litigation. One particular police assault case, involving a significant head injury, stands out as an example of Denise’s dedication to her work. She secured the Internal Affairs Bureau case file and assisted in contacting the District Attorney’s office to obtain critical information, needed in the City’s defense. Denise’s thorough case preparation on that police case contributed to a favorable settlement at the time of trial.
- **Tenisha Hilsman, Recipient** — “Above and Beyond” is the term most often used to describe Tenisha, a paralegal in the Special Federal Litigation Division. Tenisha has provided exemplary service to the law department for the past two and a half years, particularly involving the *Ingles* class action. In *Ingles*, 22 inmates serve as class representatives in a class action alleging unlawful use of force, inadequate investigations and efficient discipline throughout the New York State Department of Correction. As the *Ingles* case seeks broad institutional reform of Department of Correction operations, the Court ordered wide-ranging discovery, resulting in over 400,000 documents being scanned, redacted and produced. Tenisha is able to work in a pressure-filled environment with poise and professionalism. She is dependable and reliable, and has conducted substantive document review and analysis, as well as statistical analysis, which has proven invaluable to the litigation team.
- **John Johnson, Recipient** — A dedicated and extraordinarily responsible paralegal, John supervises several other paralegals in the Commercial and Real Estate Division. He performs all paralegal functions and often handles the most complex cases within the Division. Specifically, John assembles motions, organizes voluminous documents, assists in all aspects of discovery, and prepares cases for trial. He always takes the time to proofread all documents that are given to him prior to them being served. John is relied upon by many attorneys to complete the most complex assignments in the Division. He is a very dedicated employee who genuinely cares about his work environment and is willing to step in and assist others, and provide assistance and share his organizational skills with the other paralegals. He has also been a mentor to new paralegals and assists in the distribution of work among the other paralegals. He has been employed at the Law Department for nearly eighteen years.
- **Winston Tse, Recipient** — Outstanding performance, superlative organization and real dedication are adjectives to describe Winston work performance. A paralegal for the Trial Team of the Labor and Employment Law Division, Winston joined the Law Department in 2001. Winston’s duties as a legal assistant are distinct, in that he works for attorneys on trial who are under incredible stress. He handles a multitude of administrative duties for the trial team. Winston is often called upon to find witnesses, schedule prep sessions and trial, prepare trial notebooks for lawyers and the presiding judge, issue subpoenas and follow up to obtain documents, as well as drafting and filing costs applications. Tackling all these tasks allows the attorneys to concentrate solely on trial testimony and strategy. Winston regularly takes extra steps to get documents or extra information that otherwise would not be obtained and which often

proves to be invaluable in cross examinations. Furthermore, Winston has demonstrated great creativity and efficiency by mastering the art of filing applications against plaintiffs who have lost a trial. In this respect, he is helping the city to use a tool, otherwise underutilized due to time constraints to recover money as a prevailing party at a trial.

- **Melanie Wilson, Recipient** – Melanie is a dedicated paralegal and is an integral part of the Tax & Bankruptcy Litigation Division. She has worked at the Law Department for 10 years and is the personification of the values, vision and mission. Her strong work ethic, professionalism and grace under pressure make her a worthy recipient of the award. Melanie currently serves as the paralegal supervisor for the division, and tirelessly works to make the lives of its 40-plus attorneys much easier. In addition, Melanie also provides assistance to the Commercial & Real Estate Litigation division on *in rem* matters – a function that was transferred from her current division over a year and a half ago. On a higher level, she has been an exemplary role model for the more junior paralegals and for the division as a whole. Melanie is well respected by her colleagues, not only for the wealth of knowledge she possesses, but also for her professionalism and perseverance.

Legal Rookie Of The Year Award

The LEGAL ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD was initiated in 1990. To qualify, an attorney must be a member of the law school class of 2005. Candidates must demonstrate outstanding performance, promise, dedication, solid work ethics, constructive attitude and willingness to contribute to building a positive work environment at the Law Department. This year, the Law Department recognizes seven winners.

- **Tanisha Byron, Recipient** – Versatility, exceptional legal knowledge and strong analytic skills are words that embody Tanisha's impressive work ethic. Tanisha is a pre-trial attorney who's duties entail preparing the motion calendar for oral arguments on a weekly basis, arguing motions and conferencing cases. She has completed and won several summary judgment motions in a division where these often fall by the wayside due to the tremendous volume of cases an attorney is required to handle. In *Ella Adler v. The City of New York*, the plaintiff allegedly tripped and fell over a wooden board upon the sidewalk. Tanisha argued that the plaintiff did not show that the City had prior written notice of the alleged defect or that the City caused and created this alleged defect. The judge agreed with Tanisha's interpretation of the prior written notice law and its applicability to this case's facts and dismissed the matter. During the year Tanisha has been a pre-trial attorney, she has evolved into a consummate professional who treats her supervisors, clerks and her adversaries with respect. Tanisha has developed into an excellent attorney with a keen legal acumen and hold on municipal tort liability. Indeed, her work ethic should serve as a model for everyone.
- **Zoë Davidson, Recipient** – Zoë is an intelligent, highly motivated, diligent attorney who vigorously advocates for her clients. One of Zoë's first assignments was to assist in the defense of the *Housing Works v. Giuliani* litigation, a complicated commercial civil rights action in federal court which was recently settled. She performed exhaustive research, drafted legal memoranda on issues such as municipal liability, equal protection and the first amendment, prepared numerous witnesses for trial, and participated in strategy and settlement conferences. Zoë also handled an array of other cases, including obtaining favorable decisions in: *Delidakis v. City*, where she persuaded Supreme Court Justice Karla Moskowitz to take a position contrary to Second Circuit precedent and dismiss a plaintiff's \$2.6 million delay claim on contractual limitations grounds; *Perkins v. Councilman Vann*, where her motion to reargue was granted and she obtained dismissal of a \$23,000 breach of contract claim; *Excelsior Graphics v. City*, where her motion to dismiss for failure to file a notice of claim was granted; and *North Star v. LKB* where her motion for summary judgment was granted on the grounds that the lien was bonded and discharged. Zoë has negotiated favorable settlements of several non-payment landlord/tenant cases and breach of contract cases. She is currently handling three large construction cases, each involving breach of contract claims in excess of \$1 million. Zoë has demonstrated the ability to handle complex cases with significant monetary exposure.

- **Lisa Griffith, Recipient** — From her first case assignment and throughout her first year with the Labor and Employment Law Division, Lisa has performed her assignments in an outstanding manner, demonstrating allegiance to work and a degree of maturity and judgment not usually seen at her level of experience. Lisa serves as a staff litigation attorney defending the City and its employees in civil rights, labor, employment, civil service and a variety of other special proceedings and plenary actions. She has demonstrated the ability to quickly analyze new areas of law and research the major issues very quickly. In *Mullins v. NYPD*, a class action, Lisa quickly recognized a significant problem during her interviews of potential defense witnesses that eluded the more seasoned attorneys from the private firm. Also, on relatively short notice, she thoroughly researched a joint-employment issue under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a complex statute in and of itself. Yet, Lisa has grasped the complexities and is not hesitant to offer her credible opinions and quick analysis. In *Boyle v. Kelly*, she independently obtained needed information from high level officials within the NYPD and was able to get past “road blocks” in order to communicate directly with an NYPD Precinct Commanding Officer who was a key witness at the hearing. Lisa also performed the bulk of the hearing preparation and conducted most of the examinations during this four-day hearing.
- **Nadia Rivera, Recipient** – Nadia has distinguished herself as a first-rate litigator working in the Administrative Law Division and has handled her cases with the skill, poise, and judgment of an experienced attorney. Nadia is undaunted by complex legal issues or fact patterns, bullying adversaries, obstinate clients, and the general pressures of litigation. She has an exemplary work ethic and a constructive attitude, both when working on her own cases and when brainstorming with colleagues about their cases. Nadia’s caseload includes state court Article 78 proceedings challenging agency determinations made pursuant to local law, and criminal and civil cases brought against violators of local law. Recently, Nadia was chosen to assist a more senior attorney on a high-profile, fast-track case challenging the grant by the Business Integrity Commission of a license for the New Fulton Fish Market at Hunts Point. After having been given the assignment on a Friday afternoon, Nadia wrote papers over the weekend for expected submission on Monday morning. During the ensuing two weeks, she continued to work on the case for myriad hours, writing additional legal papers, helping to prepare for a hearing, and providing invaluable assistance to the legal team. In so doing, Nadia remained calm and unruffled at all times, and she continued to show the skill, poise and insight of a far more experienced litigator.
- **Michael Ruseskas, Recipient** – Michael stands out among a class of fine first-year attorneys in terms of his initiative, dedication and constructive contributions to a positive work environment in the Queens Family Court. Michael comes to the Law Department as a rookie this year, but he brings with him the experience of a long and successful career as an employee and then a manager of a supermarket chain store. This experience, and his focus on serving others, has translated wonderfully into the work he does each day for the Family Court Division. One example of his dedication involved the case of a respondent who came into Family Court through detention on a day when Michael was assigned to intake. The case involved serious allegations of an assault involving the use of a knife. One of the victims in the case was so badly injured that he could not leave his home to come to court. Michael immediately volunteered to accompany another attorney to the crime scene, to the home of the injured victim, and to the home of another witness who was unwilling to speak with members of our office by phone. Mike’s willingness to go the extra distance in a case in which the respondent’s culpability was initially unclear was a testament to his commitment to the ethical obligations of a prosecutor. It is not uncommon to find him helping his fellow assistants by taking statements of witnesses who would otherwise have to wait for the attorney on the case to return from court.
- **Janice Casey Silverberg, Recipient** – Janice joined the General Litigation Division in September 2004, following her graduation from Fordham Law School. During her first year, she has demonstrated excellent judgment and analytical skills in handling cases at all levels of complexity, ranging from individual special education administrative proceedings to cases challenging city policies. In assigning matters to Janice, we now consider her to be a relatively seasoned litigator, because she clearly has the level of skills and abilities far beyond a first year attorney. Her most notable cases include *Bronx Household of Faith vs. Board of Education*, a case which challenges the City’s policy of not permitting worship in public schools and *Lovely H. v. Eggleston*, a significant class action by the Legal Aid Society alleging that Human Resources

Administration (HRA) violated the Americans with Disabilities Act. Janice has also handled a number of individual matters this year. This summer, on very short notice, she successfully defended the Department of Correction in a hearing brought by an inmate who claimed that he had not been provided with appropriate medical equipment. She has prepared motion papers in state and federal court, and meticulous responses in a number of special education administrative proceedings. She has also settled a number of matters, including special education proceedings and two cases brought by inmates challenging prison conditions. Janice is dedicated to public service and her enthusiasm for the job is contagious..

- **Steven Tishco, Recipient** – In his first year in the Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation Division, Steven has consistently distinguished himself by his motivation, commitment, and perseverance. Steven is able to handle a large caseload of complex *certiorari* matters and has handled various proceedings and bankruptcy matters with brilliance. In *550 Riverside Owners Corp.*, Steven was assigned a *certiorari* matter involving the failed conversion of an apartment building to cooperative ownership. When the proceedings were commenced, the petitioner sought a combined reduction in its real estate tax liability. In addition to his use of standard research tools, Steven examined city records to uncover details concerning the multiple transfers of the property over the past twenty years. He was able to obtain critical information about income restrictions applicable to the property and the cooperative status of the property. He ultimately moved to dismiss the proceedings on various grounds or to compel the petitioner to produce documentation needed to bring the matter to a trial-ready position. Within days of receiving Steven's motion, the petitioner withdrew its claims and discontinued the proceedings. Whether he is engaged in negotiations at a preliminary conference, a conversation at the Division's quarterly breakfast or on the field at a Law Department softball game, Steven's intelligence, sense of humor, pleasant demeanor and respect for others remain his hallmark.

Legal Assistant Rookies Of The Year Award

The LEGAL ASSISTANT ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARDS are awarded to Paralegals, Claims Specialists, Student Legal Specialists or Senior Student Legal Specialists who began their Law Department career between July 2004 and June 2005, and who show promise for the future and have demonstrated exceptional dedication to their work.

- **Cynthia Lopez, Recipient** – Cynthia served as a proofreader in the Law Department for nine years before becoming a paralegal. She consistently works above and beyond her responsibilities and is a true team player. She brings comfort and relief to the attorneys with whom she works because she is dependable, reliable and always strives to do the best job. Cynthia always wants to learn and embraces challenges wherever they can be found – even when they require more work and pressure during the work day. Cynthia's quick aptitude and stellar attitude have led to her assignment on some of the division's most difficult cases, including but not limited to the three *Central Park Jogger* cases, the *Nelson* positional asphyxiation case and several police shooting cases. Moreover, Cynthia is always looking for ways to improve and expand her knowledge and expertise. She is tenacious and persistent and conducts herself with poise and professionalism. In reviewing her work during the last year, it is clear that Cynthia has high standards and handles her caseload as if she has been working here as a paralegal for many years.
- **Olga Zabala, Recipient** – Olga provides litigation support to a team of nine attorneys litigating civil rights, labor, employment, civil service and a variety of other special proceedings and plenary actions. Olga joined the Labor and Employment Law Division in February and has quickly proven herself to be a reliable, motivated member of her team. Although her work is thorough and carefully reviewed for errors before she returns it to the attorneys she works with, she always completes it on time. Olga does not get flustered by time pressures or difficult people. She works well under pressure. Olga is not content to sit still – taking initiative on projects, requesting additional work and asking questions in order to learn the reasons behind tasks. She is a friendly cooperative worker, yet has a no-nonsense approach that has served the office well in dealings with adversaries. It is a pleasure to have as responsible and motivated a paralegal as Olga.

Support Rookie Of The Year Award

The SUPPORT ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARDS are for support employees who began work at the Law Department between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2005. It recognizes outstanding performance, dedication and promise, as well as such intangibles as work ethic, attitude and contributions toward a positive work environment. This year, three rose above all others:

- **Ines Nedelcovic, Recipient** -- Ines is single-handedly responsible for the training, maintenance, expansion, development and day-to-day operations of our Agency's document management system, WorkSite. In her short time at the Law Department, Ines has made a great impact by helping all staff understand the fundamentals of this software, and has done so with a consummate sense of professionalism and talent for educating staff effectively in the most efficient application of this technology. On numerous occasions, Ines can be seen traveling from one office to another, tackling a diverse scope of service needs with intelligence, attention and an unflinchingly upbeat disposition. Bringing her constant smile on even the toughest assignments, Ines not only fixes a problem, she fully engages you in understanding what exactly went wrong. Ines has worked tirelessly to roll-out the DMS (Data Management Software) to hundreds of users in most of the agency's legal divisions. She worked nearly every weekend this summer to accomplish this task, and has been a supportive, dedicated and cheerful advocate throughout the process. In addition, she has worked with scores of end-users to make the system more valuable to each division (i.e. Tort Expert Witness Database, Workspace design and application integration). Ines brings technology into the realm of the human and makes it friendly, and accessible. Her training presentations reveal qualities of an astute educator, and one in whom the end result of learning new technologies brings forward continued learning and success with future technologies.
- **Kim Huynh, Recipient** – Kim joined the Workers' Compensation Division a little over a year ago and has rapidly proven herself to be an asset. Kim currently handles a caseload which is comprised of 20 plus agencies where she must address inquires from claimants, medical providers and City Agency Liaisons. Furthermore, she processes medical claims for payment or objection, reviews cases upon return from hearings, makes voluntary payments, and reviews medical reports submitted by doctors. After a few short months, she was able to handle her cases professionally with limited supervision and has made good judgment calls resulting in positive rulings on her cases. Kim performs her duties professionally and is always willing to help. When two staff members in her unit went out on extended medical leave, Kim, who was still at the training stages of her job, pitched in to carry out their work. She is detail oriented and incredibly organized. She has great troubleshooting skills and multi tasks with great ease. Her pleasant, calm demeanor makes her very approachable and a pleasure with whom to work.
- **Tarlisha Bullock, Recipient** - In the short time Tarlisha has been at the Law Department, she has demonstrated true commitment and distinction as our Agency's Benefits Coordinator. Tarlisha conducts benefits orientations, updates employees on benefit changes, and answers numerous employee benefit questions. In addition, she processes employee leaves as well as COBRA health benefit notifications for separating employees. Tarlisha ensures that all eligible employees who opt for city coverage receive their benefits quickly. Additionally, Tarlisha is responsible for coordinating our agency's blood drives and health fairs. Tarlisha has been instrumental in reconstructing the benefits portion of our online office manual. She regularly ensures that employees are aware of these changes by making certain that our agency newsletter is regularly updated to contain relevant postings and deadlines of benefit changes. Moreover, she attends seminars pertaining to her area of responsibilities offered by our oversight agencies and frequently requests one on one sessions when no official training is offered on topics of concern to our staff. Finally, she is currently working on a user-friendly enhancement of the office manual.

The Pro Bono Award

The *Pro Bono* award is given to an attorney who has demonstrated distinction by providing extraordinary legal *pro bono* services during the past year. This award recognizes the efforts and contributions of significant volunteer legal work.

- **Lynn Leopold, Recipient** – Senior Counsel Lynn Leopold has been with the Law Department for nearly five years. She is currently assigned to Family Court in Bronx County, where she serves as the designated felony assistant. In this capacity, she is responsible for handling some of the most serious and complex juvenile delinquency cases referred to the office. Notwithstanding her rather sizeable caseload, Lynn always makes time to assist more junior attorneys and support staff in the borough. In addition to Lynn's devotion to her cases and determination in assisting victims of youth crime, she gives considerable effort to *pro bono* activities. Over the years, she has been involved in the Legal Outreach Mentoring Program, a program that pairs college-bound students with mentor attorneys for a host of pro-social pursuits, including constitutional law debates, and social events celebrating ethnic and cultural heritages. Lynn has been a regular participant in the Monday Night Law Clinic, a program dedicated to assisting those with housing, employment, family matters and personal bankruptcy problems. She volunteers as an arbitrator in Small Claims Court, where she devotes considerable time to fashioning just resolutions for the parties. She is an active member of the City Bar, serving on its juvenile justice subcommittee. Woven into her regular participation with these groups, Lynn speaks about the law and sits as a judge in many legal competitions at public schools and colleges throughout the City.

The Community Service Award

THE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD is a new award this year, instituted to illustrate the Law Department's pride and appreciation of a non-legal staff member who has shown distinction through his or her participation in providing volunteer services to not-for-profit or community organization(s) during the past year. We are proud to present the first Community Service Award to Kyisha Brooks.

- **Kyisha Brooks, Recipient** – Right from the start, Kyisha, a devoted paralegal in the Special Federal Litigation Division, has impressed her co-workers with her diligence and allegiance to community service programs. A 2004 graduate of Northeastern University, Kyisha is currently enrolled at Seton Hall University, where she is pursuing a Masters of Public Administration and a Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy. While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Kyisha studied at Cambridge for a summer and interned at the office of Senator Hillary Clinton and the office of Senator Edward Kennedy. She has been a dynamic and dedicated member of our staff. Her work as a paralegal has been exemplary, yet what makes Kyisha truly special is her commitment to community service. Kyisha performs volunteer work for the New York Urban League, mentoring 11th and 12th grade students at Thurgood Marshall High School on the benefits of a college education. Also through the Urban League, Kyisha participates in the America Reads Program, which by reading to children, encourages literacy. Kyisha further volunteers with the Police Athletic League (PAL) in Brooklyn. At PAL, she mentors children and teenagers. She is proficient in Sign Language. Kyisha also teaches a regular dance class for children at PAL. Kyisha also served as a volunteer at a United Nations symposium in the Spring of 2005. For her years of genuine commitment and distinction, we are proud to present Kyisha Brooks with the Community Service Award.

Agency Counsel Recognition Award

This AGENCY COUNSEL RECOGNITION AWARD is presented to an attorney with at least three years of legal service in an agency other than the Law Department. The qualities being recognized are distinguished performance, dedication and initiative demonstrated throughout the candidate's career, and outstanding specific accomplishments which further the mission of his or her agency.

- **Matthew Shafit, Recipient** – Matthew Shafit, General Counsel and Deputy Commissioner of Legal Affairs of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), has been the head of HPD's legal staff since May of 1995. Matt joined HPD as Deputy General Counsel in September 1986. Prior to working at HPD, he was an attorney in private practice. Matt works closely with the Law Department on a myriad of issues. He works with the Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation Division in bankruptcy proceedings and in complex condemnation matters involving acquisition of properties within urban renewal areas. Matt works with the Administrative Law Division on tenant rent subsidy matters and regulatory enforcement issues. Matt is also always

available to consult with our Commercial and Real Estate Litigation Division about litigation challenging HPD's numerous real estate disposition programs, *in rem* matters, construction matters, as well as actions to quiet title and litigation concerning fraudulent conveyances of city-owned property. Matt also works regularly with the Economic Development Division on transaction matters involving commercial development projects with urban renewal areas. Matt is the City's steward of urban renewal policy and the primary resource for the often tangled ramifications of an unequivocal understanding of the Urban Renewal Law and its practice implications. Matt's comprehensive knowledge of all HPD programs and his ability to present his agency's position in a clear and concise manner are invaluable to us as well as his collegiality and readiness to collaborate in an efficacious way. Matt is always available for telephone conferences or meetings. He is always courteous and very sensitive to the time pressures inherent in litigation. Matt has not only mastered the complexities of HPD's work, but is responsible and conscientious in helping the Law Department represent HPD's interests in litigation. Matt thoroughly understands the importance of litigation and its impact on the business of HPD.

New York County Lawyers Association's Public Service Award

- **Muriel Goode-Trufant, Recipient** – Muriel Goode-Trufant, the Chief of our Special Federal Litigation Division and our EEO Officer has been selected by the New York County Lawyers Association as a recipient of the Association's Public Service Award. The award, given in recognition of Muriel's distinguished service as a public-sector lawyer, was presented to her and six other public sector attorneys at the Association's Home of Law on September 28th. We congratulate Muriel for this well-deserved honor.

Excellence in it Support and Service Awards

- **Anthony Cioffi and Michael Destefano, Recipients** – On Tues., Nov. 1st, the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DOITT) hosted its annual NYC Excellence in Technology awards at the Brooklyn Marriott. The Law Department's own Michael Destefano and Anthony Cioffi were each recognized with Excellence in IT Support and Service Awards. The annual citywide Excellence in Technology Awards program was established to salute the city's professionals and managers in the use and innovations associated with information technology. Each agency is asked to select its most outstanding technical support Manager and Support Member for recognition. The purpose of this award is to recognize those that provide operational services of such high quality that problems never arise or are quickly and effectively handled. This includes quality of service, customer focus, response time and dependability.

Military Service Recognition

The Office of the Corporation Counsel is proud to recognize the members of our staff who made the personal sacrifice of serving our country this year. **Ramon Barreiro, Jon Clark and Ralph Sabatino** temporarily uprooted their professional and personal lives to honor the commitments each of them made to protect and serve. We honor these individuals for the selfless dedication they have demonstrated and extend to them our most heartfelt appreciation.

Division Chief Awards

The DIVISION CHIEF AWARDS provide an opportunity for Division Chiefs to select one or more individuals within their division who have demonstrated a superior legal or non-legal accomplishment during the year. Below is a list of employees recognized by their Division Chief for exceptional performance:

Administration

Armando Carles, Cassandra Dodson, Thomas Dowling, Katherine Emerson, Natalya Fadeyeva, Vipul Gheewala, Errol Gordon, Steven Jenkins, Laura Krsinic, Tieise O'Bryant, Tiffany Parker, Manouchka Prophete, Kelvin Smith, Chiaffa Wymes

Affirmative Litigation

Christopher Dickerson

Commercial and Real Estate Litigation

Robin Green, Felicia Jenkins, Karen Ross

Economic Development

Krishna Jayaram

Family Court

Carol Coote

General Litigation

Maria Carcamo-Perez, Judith Lieberman

John Hewson, Kimberly Conway

Information Technology

Joyce Horman, James Kim, Ji Li, Agnes Singh

Legal Counsel

Steve Ackerman

Operations

Jerry Bradshaw, Richard Brown, Irma Francis, Garry Jean-Gilles, Ted Joseph, Richard Jung, Kevin Massiglia, Jane Paganini, Melanie Perez, Madelyn Santana, Shirish Shah, Albert Simon, Ron Young

Pensions

Jay Cooke

Special Federal Litigation

Joan Denis, David Hazan, Geraldine Lucero, Pamela Mahon, Natalia Malina; Colene, Morton-Scott, Kammae Owens, James Sanford, Rachel Seligman, Guy Washington

Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation

Fred Kolikoff,

Tom Casey Memorial Award

Mary O'Rourke

Tort

Teressa Barillas, Jeffrey Barnes, Bradley Braut, Ann Broderick, Karlyne Fequiere-Pierre, Elizabeth Gallay, Jeffrey Grossman, Marti Hirst, Denyce Holgate, Cori LaCasaGardner Miller, Chris Murdoch, Lavanya Pisupati, Karen Richardson, John Schmidt, Michael Shender, Patrick Mantione, Rachel Welch, Stephen Williamson

Fay Bailey, Michelle Bassett, Luevader Calloway, Mae Carrington, Verlisamer Duncan, Denise Edwards, Bouchra Elsayed, Yvette Garrett, Rickie Harris, Eurcill Hazell, Don Holder, Richard Iannotta, Carol Kinglan King, Clayton Liburd, Denise Moore, Chris Patton, LaVonne Pridgen, Frances Quinones, Jane Sayers, Aisha Smith, Lucille Spiropoulos

Workers' Compensation

Naomi McQueen, Eric Shenk

NYC Municipal Affairs Committee's Outstanding Corporation Counsel Awards

Annually, the Municipal Affairs Committee of the Bar Association of the City of New York presents awards to Assistant Corporation Counsels who have demonstrated outstanding promise, ability and achievement in public service law. The nominees must be attorneys recently admitted to the Bar with two to five years employment in the Corporation Counsel's Office. Nominations are made by Division Chiefs to a subcommittee of the Municipal Affairs Committee which makes the final selections. The winners listed below were presented with their awards at the Association by Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo:

Michelle Goldberg-Cahn / Administrative Law
Meredith Kopelow / Family Court
Gabriela Cacuci / Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation

Longevity Awards

This year we are applauding the following members of the agency who have been with us for TWENTY-FIVE YEARS:

Michael Adler – Commercial and Real Estate Litigation; Patricia Butler – Tort; Delores Carr – Special Federal Litigation; Cheryl L. Coles – Workers' Compensation; Suzanne K. Colt – Appeals; Suzanne D'Amico – Tort; Annie Davis – Tort; Regina Feder – Tax And Bankruptcy Litigation; Marguerite V. Fountain – Operations; Charles Freeman – Affirmative Litigation; Deborah Harrison - Workers' Compensation; Sheryl Hobbs – Tort; Barbara Kafah – Tort; Julian L. Kalkstein – Appeals; Zelma J. Moore – Tort; Larry Richman – Family Court; Mayra E. Rueda - Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation; Susan M. Shapiro - Commercial and Real Estate Litigation

This year we are applauding the following members of the agency who have been with us for THIRTY YEARS:

Chester D. Belatsky - Family Court; Olivia Goodman – Legal Counsel; Nadine Powell - Tax and Bankruptcy Litigation; Marjorie Diane Wiener – Family Court

This year we are applauding the following member of the agency who has been with us for THIRTY-FIVE YEARS:

Jeffrey D. Friedlander – Executive

The New York City Law Department is one of the oldest, largest and most dynamic law offices in the world, ranking among the top three largest law offices in New York City and the top three largest public law offices in the country. Tracing its roots back to the 1600's, the Department's 650-plus lawyers handle more than 90,000 cases and transactions each year in 17 separate legal divisions. The Corporation Counsel heads the Law Department and acts as legal counsel for the Mayor, elected officials, the City and all its agencies. The Department's attorneys represent the City on a vast array of civil litigation, legislative and legal issues and in the criminal prosecution of juveniles. Its web site can be accessed through the City government home page at www.nyc.gov or via direct link at www.nyc.gov/html/law/home.html.

###